

Malaysia, Singapore & Brunei

Melaka (Chapter)

Edition 12th Edition, May 2013

Pages 20

Page Range 207-226



Coverage includes: Melaka City & Around, Ayer Keroh, Pulau Besar, Alor Gajah and Tanjung Bidara.

Useful Links:

Having trouble viewing your file? Head to [Lonely Planet Troubleshooting](#).

Need more assistance? Head to the [Help and Support page](#).

Want to find more chapters? Head back to the [Lonely Planet Shop](#).

Want to hear fellow travellers' tips and experiences?

[Lonely Planet's Thortree Community](#) is waiting for you!



Melaka

06 / POPULATION: 788,700 / AREA: 1652 SQ KM

Includes »

Melaka City.....	209
Around Melaka City.....	225
Ayer Keroh.....	225
Pulau Besar.....	225
Alor Gajah.....	225
Tanjung Bidara.....	226

Best Places to Eat

- » Pak Putra (p220)
- » Capitol Satay (p221)
- » Nancy's Kitchen (p220)
- » Selvam (p222)
- » Hainan Food Street (p220)

Best Places to Stay

- » 45 Lekiu & The Stable (p217)
- » Majestic Malacca (p219)
- » River View Guesthouse (p217)
- » Hotel Puri (p217)
- » Apa Kaba Home & Stay (p219)

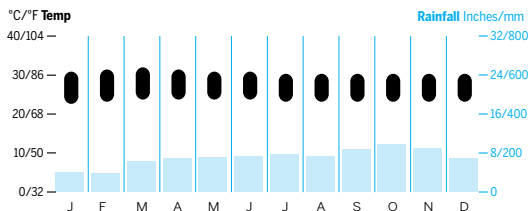
Why Go?

Back when Kuala Lumpur was a malaria-ridden swamp and Penang was yet to become the 'Pearl of the Orient,' Melaka was already one of the greatest trading ports in Southeast Asia. Over time it lost ground to Singapore and became a sleepy backwater compared with its high-rolling cousin. Ultimately this downturn preserved much of the ancient architecture as well as the old ways of life, and today Melaka is hugely back on the tourist radar thanks to its 2008 designation as a Unesco World Heritage Site.

More allure comes from the city's mixed Malay, Chinese, Indian and European heritage and the serene *kampung* (villages) scattered among the state's tropical forests, farmlands and beaches. Over generations, this cultural mix has developed variations on traditional cuisine, including the famed Malay-Chinese Nonya food, which is so delicious that just the food is reason enough to visit.

When to Go

Melaka



Jan–Feb Chinese New Year, high temperatures and little rainfall.

Apr–Jul The coolest temperatures and tons of festivals.

Nov–Dec Christmas and Deepavali are celebrated with great fanfare.

History

However the history of the city-state of Melaka is told, the story of the state is inseparable from that of the city for which it was named. Before the late 14th century, Melaka was a simple fishing village.

Founded by Parameswara, a Hindu prince from Sumatra, and located halfway between China and India, and with easy access to the spice islands of Indonesia, Melaka attracted merchants from all over the East and became a favoured port.

In 1405 the Chinese Muslim Admiral Cheng Ho arrived in Melaka bearing gifts from the Ming emperor and the promise of protection from Siamese enemies. Chinese settlers followed, who mixed with the local Malays to become known as the Baba and Nonya, the Peranakans or Straits Chinese. By the time of Parameswara's death in 1414,

Melaka was a powerful trading state. Its position was consolidated by the state's adoption of Islam in the mid-15th century.

In 1509 the Portuguese came seeking the wealth of the spice and in 1511 Alfonso de Albuquerque forcibly took the city. Under the Portuguese, the fortress of A'Famosa was constructed, and missionaries strove to implant Catholicism. While Portuguese cannons could easily conquer Melaka, they could not force Muslim merchants from Arabia and India to continue trading there, and other ports in the area, such as Islamic Demak on Java, grew to overshadow Melaka.

Suffering harrying attacks from neighbouring Johor and Negeri Sembilan, as well as from the Islamic power of Aceh in Sumatra, Melaka declined further. The city passed into Dutch hands after an eight-month siege in 1641 and the Dutch ruled Melaka for



Melaka Highlights

- 1 Eating Chinese dim sum for breakfast, Nonya food for lunch and Pakistani tandoori for dinner at Melaka's **fabulous restaurants** (p220)
- 2 Catching glimpses of old-time Melaka while leisurely wandering through historic **Chinatown** (p213)
- 3 Snacking and perusing trinket stands at the

Jonker's Walk Night Market

- 4 Feeling like a happy fool while rocking out to '80s dance hits in a wacky Melaka **trishaw** (p209)
- 5 Imagining the past and all its intricacies at the **Baba-Nonya Heritage Museum** (p214)
- 6 Spending a day browsing Chinatown's varied **art**

galleries (p213) and chatting with the artists

- 7 Getting lost in the tangle of the three downtown **shopping malls** (p223) and stumbling upon a local stage show
- 8 Watching freighters move down the Strait of Melaka while lounging on the white sands of **Tanjung Bidara** (p226)

about 150 years. Melaka again became the centre for peninsular trade, but the Dutch directed more energy into their possessions in Indonesia.

When the French occupied Holland in 1795, the British (as allies of the Dutch) temporarily assumed administration of the Dutch colonies. In 1824 Melaka was permanently ceded to the British.

Melaka, together with Penang and Singapore, formed the Straits settlements, the three British territories that were the centres for later expansion into the peninsula. However, under British rule Melaka was eclipsed by other Straits settlements and then superseded by the rapidly growing commercial importance of Singapore. Apart from a brief upturn in the early 20th century when rubber was an important crop, Melaka returned again to being a quiet backwater, patiently awaiting its renaissance as a tourist drawcard.

MELAKA CITY

06

Melaka's Chinatown was granted Unesco World Heritage Site status in 2008, and this sealed the city's claim as one of Malaysia's hottest tourist destinations. The development that has ensued is mind-boggling. Unfortunately, 'preserving heritage' has often been translated into gaudy shop signs, night market street vendors selling cheap trinkets rather than authentic Melakan items and big-name businesses constructing new buildings on the historic riverfront. The charm in Chinatown still lingers however, and is best represented by its resident artists, cooks and creative trishaws. With the oldest functioning mosque, Catholic church and Buddhist temple in the country, the city today (as it has for centuries) exudes a tolerance that accepts visitors of every creed and always promises to show them a good time. And all the modern action still blends in with the gorgeous surrounding Peranakan, Portuguese and Dutch architecture.

Plus there's the food. From the distinct Peranakan dishes to Eurasian Portuguese cooking and Indian banana-leaf shops, the citywide restaurant aromas add further colour to the cultural mosaic that makes Melaka such an astonishing destination.

It's easy to feel the town's old magic (and get a seat at the more popular restaurants) on the quiet weekdays, but during the week-

ends there are so many photo-snapping tourists that the whole town can feel like front row at a rock concert.

Sights

The following sights are listed in geographical order and could be used as a walking tour: start going northwest on Jln Tun Tan Cheng Lock, follow the map to head south-east down Jln Tokong, then finish by heading northwest again up Jln Hang Jebet.

HISTORIC TOWN CENTRE

This area has a ridiculous number of museums clustered along Jln Kota. The **Islamic Museum** (Map p210; admission RM1; ☎9am-5.30pm Wed-Sun), the **Architecture Museum** (Map p210; admission RM2; ☎9.30am-5pm Tue-Sun), which focuses on local housing design, and the **Muzium Rakyat** (People's Museum; Map p210; adult RM2; ☎9am-5.30pm Wed-Mon), which covers everything from *gasing uri* (top-spinning) to mutilation for beauty, are all worth visiting if you have time on your hands. Most of the others use a bland diorama format where visitors walk through a maze of wordy displays.

Stadthuys

HISTORIC BUILDING

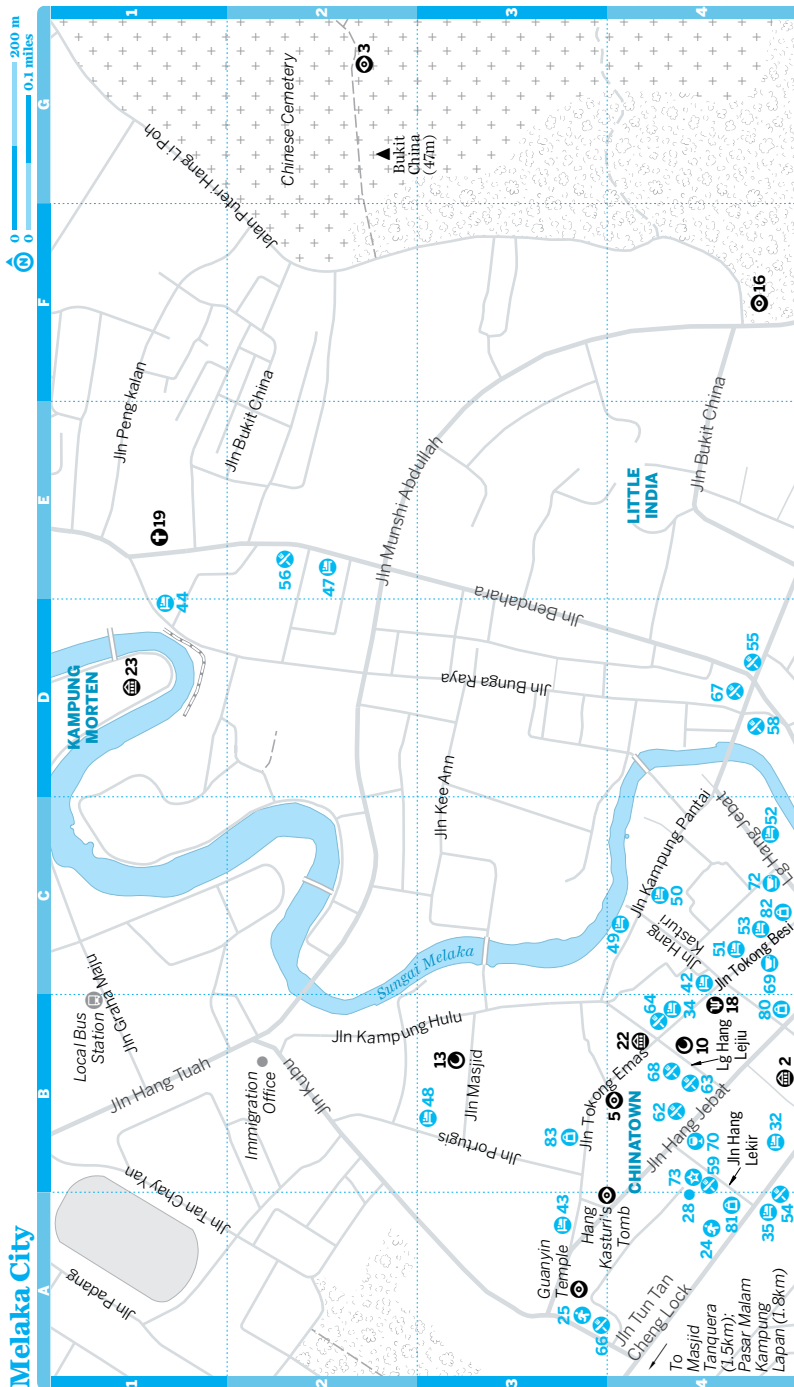
(Town Sq; Map p210; ☎282 6526; admission adult/child RM5/2; ☎9am-5.30pm Sat-Thu, 9am-12.15pm & 2.45-5.30pm Fri, History & Ethnography Museum guided tours 10.30am & 2.30pm Sat & Sun) Melaka's most unmistakable landmark and favourite trishaw pick-up spot is the Stadthuys, the imposing salmon-pink town hall and governor's residence. It's believed to be the oldest Dutch building in the East, built shortly after Melaka was captured by the Dutch in 1641, and is a reproduction of the former Stadhuis (town hall) of the Friian town of Hoorn in the Netherlands.

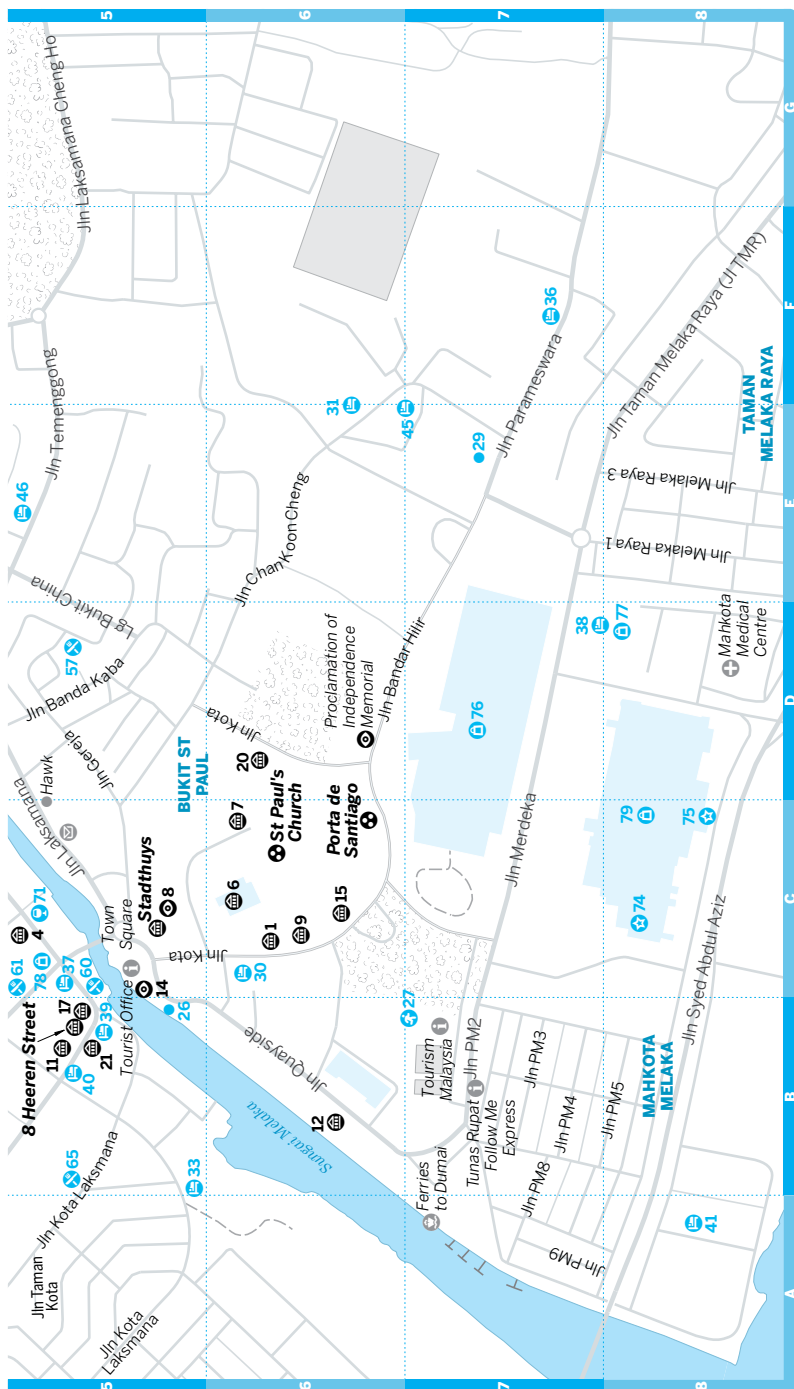
Housed inside the Stadthuys is the nicely presented **History & Ethnography Museum** (Map p210; ☎guided tours 10.30am & 2.30pm Sat & Sun), and also part of the complex is the mildly interesting **Literature Museum** (Map p210), focusing on Malaysian writers. Admission to both museums (as well as the **Governor's House** (Map p210) and the **Democratic Government Museum** (Map p210)) is included in the admission price to Stadthuys.

Porta de Santiago

RUIN

(A'Famosa; Map p210; Jln Bandar Hilir) A quick photo stop at this fort is a must. Porta de Santiago was built by the Portuguese as a





Melaka City

Top Sights

8 Heeren Street.....	B5
Porta de Santiago.....	C6
St Paul's Church.....	C6
Stadhuis.....	C5

Sights

1 Architecture Museum.....	C6
2 Baba-Nonya Heritage Museum.....	B4
3 Bukit China.....	G2
4 Cheng Ho Cultural Museum.....	C5
5 Cheng Hoon Teng Temple.....	B4
6 Democratic Government Museum.....	C6
7 Governor's House.....	C6
8 History & Ethnography Museum.....	C5
9 Islamic Museum.....	C6
10 Kampung Kling Mosque.....	B4
11 Kim Hai Gallery.....	B5
King's Well..... (see 16)	
Literature Museum..... (see 8)	
12 Maritime Museum & Naval Museum.....	B6
13 Masjid Kampung Hulu.....	B3
14 Melaka Malay Sultanate Water Wheel.....	C5
15 Muzium Rakyat.....	C6
Paku Pakis Collection..... (see 4)	
16 Poh San Teng Temple.....	F4
17 Shih Wen Naphaporn Artist Studio.....	B5

18 Sri Poyatha Venayagar Moorthi Temple.....	B4
19 St Peter's Church.....	E1
20 Sultanate Palace.....	D6
21 Tham Siew Inn Artist Gallery.....	B5
22 Titi Art Gallery.....	B4
23 Villa Sentosa.....	D1

Activities, Courses & Tours

24 Biossentials Puri Spa.....	A4
25 Massa Sūtra.....	A3
26 Melaka River Cruise.....	B5
27 Menara Taming Sari.....	B7
28 Nancy's Kitchen.....	A4
29 Wok & Walk.....	E7

Sleeping

45 Lekiu & The Stable..... (see 22)	
30 Aldy Hotel.....	C6
31 Apa Kaba Home & Stay.....	E6
32 Cafe 1511 Guesthouse.....	B4
33 Casa Del Rio.....	B5
34 Chong Hoe Hotel.....	B4
35 Courtyard@Heeren.....	A4
36 Emily Travellers Home.....	F7
37 Hangout@Jonker.....	C5
38 Hatten Hotel.....	D7
39 Heeren House.....	B5

fortress in 1511. The Dutch were busy destroying the bulk of the fort when Sir Stamford Raffles came by in 1810 and saved what remains today.

In 2006, work on the Menara Taming Sari revolving tower uncovered another part of the famous wall. The revolving tower was relocated further inland, the remains of the fortress walls were reconstructed and are now home to the 13-metre high **Melaka Malay Sultanate Water Wheel** (Map p210) replica. The original wheel would have been used to channel the river waters for the large number of traders swarming Melaka during the 15th and 16th centuries.

St Paul's Church

RUIN

(Map p210) St Paul's Church is a breezy sanctuary reached after a steep flight of stairs. Originally built by a Portuguese captain in 1521, the church offers views over Melaka from the summit of Bukit St Paul. The church was regularly visited by St Francis Xavier, and following his death in China the




saint's body was temporarily interred here for nine months before being transferred to Goa, where it remains today. Visitors can look into his ancient tomb (surrounded by a wire fence) in the centre of the church, and a marble statue of the saint gazes wistfully over the city.

When the Dutch completed their own Christ Church in 1590 at the base of the hill, St Paul fell into disuse. Under the British a lighthouse was built and the church eventually ended up as a storehouse for gunpowder. The church has been in ruins for more than 150 years.

Sultanate Palace

MUSEUM

(Map p210; Jln Kota; admission RM3; ☎9am-6pm) Housing a cultural museum, this wooden replica of the palace of Mansur Shah of Mansur Shah, the famous sultan who ruled Melaka from 1456 to 1477, is based on descriptions of the original palace from *Sejarah Melayu* (*Malay Annals*; a chronicle of the establishment of the Malay sultanate

40	Heeren Inn	B5	63	Limau-Limau Cafe	B4
41	Holiday Inn	A8	64	Low Yong Mow	B4
	Hotel Equatorial	(see 29)		Nancy's Kitchen	(see 28)
	Hotel Puri	(see 24)	65	Pak Putra Restaurant	B5
42	Jalan Jalan Guesthouse	C4	66	Poh Piah Lwee	A3
43	Jonker Boutique Hotel	A3	67	Selvam	D4
44	Majestic Malacca	D1	68	Vegetarian Restaurant	B4
45	Malacca Straits Hotel	E7			
46	Old Town Family Guesthouse	E5	 Drinking		
47	Renaissance Melaka Hotel	E2	69	Cheng Ho Tea House	C4
48	Ringo's Foyer	B3	70	Geographér Cafe	B4
49	River View Guesthouse	C4	71	Voyager Travellers Lounge	C5
50	Rooftop Guesthouse	C4	72	Zheng Ho Tea House	C4
51	Sama-Sama Guest House	C4			
52	Tidur Tidur	C4	 Entertainment		
53	Voyage Guest House	C4	73	Eleven	B4
			74	Golden Screen Cinemas	C8
			75	Mixx	C8
 Eating			 Shopping		
54	Baboon House	A4	76	Dataran Pahlawan	D7
55	Baker's Oven & Cafe	D4	77	Hatten Square	D8
56	Bulldog Cafe	E2	78	Jonker's Walk Night Market	C5
57	Capitol Satay	D5	79	Mahkota Parade Shopping Complex	C8
58	Discovery Cafe	D4	80	Orangutan House	B4
59	Hainan Food Street	B4	81	Orangutan House	A4
60	Harper's Cafe	C5	82	Orangutan House	C4
61	Hoe Kee Chicken Rice	C5	83	Wah Aik Shoemaker	B3
62	Jonker 88 Heritage	B4			
	Jonker's Walk Night Market	(see 43)			

and 600 years of Malay history), and is built entirely without nails.

Maritime Museum & Naval Museum

MUSEUM

(Map p210; Jln Quayside; admission RM5; ☎9am-5.30pm Sun-Thu, 9am-9pm Fri & Sat) Housed in a huge recreation of the *Flor de la Mar*, a Portuguese ship that sank off the coast of Melaka, the Maritime Museum merits a visit. Clamber up for a detailed examination of Melaka's history, picked out by rather faded and dated props. The museum continues in the building next door with more absorbing exhibits featuring local vessels, including the striking *Kepala Burung* (a boat carved like a feathered bird) plus an assortment of nautical devices.

CHINATOWN

Chinatown is the heart of Melaka and is by far the most interesting area to wander around. Stroll along **Jln Tun Tan Cheng Lock**, formerly called Heeren St, which was the preferred address for wealthy Baba (Straits-born Chinese) traders who were

most active during the short-lived rubber boom of the early 20th century. The centre street of Chinatown is **Jln Hang Jebat**, formerly known as Jonker St (or Junk St Melaka), which was once famed for its antique shops but is now more of a collection of clothing and crafts outlets and restaurants. On Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, the street is transformed into the Jonker's Walk Night Market (p223). Finally, the northern section of **Jln Tokong** (also known as Harmony St) houses a mosque, Chinese temple and a handful of authentic Chinese shops.

FREE 8 Heeren Street

HISTORIC BUILDING

(Map p210; 8 Jln Tun Tan Cheng Lock; ☎11am-4pm Tue-Sat) This 18th-century Dutch-period residential house was restored as a model conservation project. The project was partially chronicled in the beautifully designed coffee-table book *Voices from the Street*, which is for sale at the house along with other titles. You can also pick up an *Endangered Trades: A Walking Tour of Malacca's Living Heritage* (RM5) booklet

DON'T MISS

MELAKA'S ART GALLERIES

Almost hidden between the gaudy trinket shops and humble local businesses are an array of eclectic art galleries that make for a lovely day of browsing. Opening hours are erratic but many try to be open from 10am-6pm and most close on Wednesday. The following are some of our favourites listed by location so you could incorporate them into a walking tour:

Paku Pakis Collection (Map p210; 21 Jln Tukang Besi) Go here for Leong Hock Khoon's Baba-Nonya inspired art that ranges from realism to modern and stylised.

Shih Wen Naphaporn Artist Studio (Map p210; 14 Jln Tuna Tan Cheng Lock) A husband and wife duo. Chiang Shiwen is Melaka born and creates Cubo-futuristic works while Thai Naphapone Phanwiset uses fish, fruit and the female form as her muse in marvelous neutral-toned pieces.

Tham Siew Inn Artist Gallery (Map p210; 49 Jln Tun Tan Teng Lock) Than Siew works mostly with water colours while his son makes traditional stone Chinese stamps to order (from RM60).

Kim Hai Gallery (Map p210; 42 Jln Tun Tan Cheng Lock) Paints apples to create mosaics of colour.

Titi Art Gallery (Map p210; 4 Jln Tokong) Titi Kawok paints village and fishing landscapes as modern images.

and map for an excellent self-guided tour of the city centre.

Baba-Nonya Heritage Museum MUSEUM
(Map p210; 283 1273; 48-50 Jln Tun Tan Cheng Lock; adult/child RM10/5; 10am-12.30pm & 2-4.30pm Wed-Mon) Touring this traditional Peranakan townhouse takes you back to a time when women hid behind elaborate partitions when guests dropped by, and every social situation had its specific location within the house. The captivating museum is arranged to look like a typical 19th-century Baba-Nonya residence. The highlight is the tour guides, who tell tales of the past with a distinctly Peranakan sense of humour.

Cheng Hoon Teng Temple CHINESE TEMPLE
(Qing Yun Ting or Green Clouds Temple; Map p210; 25 Jln Tokong; 7am-7pm) Malaysia's oldest traditional Chinese temple (dating from 1646) remains a central place of worship for the Buddhist community in Melaka. Notable for its carved woodwork, the temple is dedicated to Kuan Yin, the Goddess of mercy. Across the street from the main temple is a **traditional opera theatre**.

Masjid Kampung Hulu MOSQUE
(Map p210; cnr Jln Masjid & Jln Kampung Hulu) This is the oldest functioning mosque in Malaysia and was, surprisingly, commissioned by the Dutch in 1728. The mosque is

made up of predominantly Javanese architecture with a multitiered roof in place of the standard dome; at the time of construction, domes and minarets had not yet come into fashion.

Kampung Kling Mosque MOSQUE
(Map p210; Jln Tokong) This hoary mosque has a multitiered *meru* roof (a stacked form similar to that seen in Balinese Hindu architecture), which owes its inspiration to Hindu temples, and a Moorish watchtower minaret typical of early mosques in Sumatra.

Sri Poyatha Venayagar Moorthi Temple HINDU TEMPLE
(Map p210; Jln Tukang Emas) One of the first Hindu temples built in the country, this temple was constructed in 1781 on the plot given by the religiously tolerant Dutch and dedicated to the Hindu deity Venayagar.

Cheng Ho Cultural Museum MUSEUM
(Map p210; 283 1135; 51 Lg Hang Jebat; adult/child RM20/10; 9am-6pm Mon-Thu, 9am-7pm Fri-Sun) A lengthy paean to Ming Admiral Cheng Ho (Zheng He), this museum charts the tremendous voyages of the intrepid Chinese Muslim seafarer. It's your classic Malaysian museum with lots of dioramas and recreated scenes with dummies, but the subject is very interesting so you could spend a few hours in here.

AROUND THE CITY CENTRE

Bukit China

CEMETERY

(Map p210) More than 12,500 graves, including about 20 Muslim tombs, cover the 25 grassy hectares of this serene hill. Since the times of British rule there have been several attempts to acquire Bukit China for road widening, land reclamation or development purposes. Fortunately, Cheng Hoon Teng Temple (p214), with strong community support, has thwarted these attempts.

In the middle of the 15th century the sultan of Melaka imported the Ming emperor's daughter from China as his bride, in a move to seal relations between the two countries. She brought with her a vast retinue, including 500 handmaidens, to Bukit China and it has been a Chinese area ever since. **Poh San Teng Temple** (Map p210) sits at the base of the hill and was built in 1795. To the right of the temple is the **King's Well** (Map p210), a 15th-century well built by Sultan Mansur Shah.

Villa Sentosa

HISTORIC BUILDING

(Peaceful Villa; Map p210; ☎282 3988; entry by donation; ☺flexible but around 9am-6pm) A highlight of a visit to the area is viewing this 1920s Malay *kampung* house on Sungai Melaka. A member of the family will show you around the house and its collection of objects, including Ming dynasty ceramics and a 100-year-old copy of the Quran. Most of all, it's an opportunity to wander through a genuine *kampung* house and chat with your charming host.

St Peter's Church

CHURCH

(Map p210; Jln Bendahara) St Peter's Church is the oldest functioning Catholic church in Malaysia, built in 1710 by descendants of early Portuguese settlers. On Good Friday the church comes alive when Melakan Christians flock here, many of them making it the occasion for a trip home from far-flung parts of the country.

Kampung Chitty

NEIGHBOURHOOD

As well as the Baba-Nonya, Melaka also has a small community of Chitty – Straits-born Indians, offspring of the Indian traders who intermarried with Malay women. Having arrived in the 1400s, the Chitties are regarded as older than the Chinese-Malay Peranakan community. Their area of town, known as Kampung Chitty, lies west of Jln Gajah Berang, about 1km northwest of Chinatown; look for the archway with elephant sculptures beside the Mutamariman Temple. It's a pretty district in

which to wander and see traditional Malay-style houses. The tiny **Chitty Museum** (☎281 1289; ☎9.30am-5pm Tue-Sun) is a community effort with a collection of colourful artefacts.

The best time to visit is in May, during the Mariamman Festival (Pesta Datuk Charchar), a Hindu celebration during which you might also be fortunate enough to witness a traditional Indian wedding ceremony.

Little India

NEIGHBOURHOOD

Heading east from Kampung Chitty, past Chinatown and across the river, is Melaka's surprisingly plain Little India. While it's not nearly as charming as the historic centre or Chinatown, this busy area along Jln Bendahara and Jln Temenggong is a worthwhile place for soaking up some Indian influence and grabbing an excellent banana-leaf meal. During Deepavali a section of Jln Temenggong closes to traffic to make way for Indian cultural performances and street-food vendors.



Activities

Head to the fourth to sixth floors of the **Dataran Palawan mall** for a fun centre with ever-changing activities including carnival-style games, billiards and karaoke. The best at the time of research was **Super Roller** (6th floor Dataran Pahlawan mall; RM25 incl skate rental; ☎11am-11pm Mon-Thu, 11am-12am Fri-Sat), a black-lit, neon-painted roller disco dubbed the 'biggest in Malaysia,' although it's actually about the size of lap pool.

Cookery Courses

Nancy's Kitchen

COOKERY

(Map p210; ☎283 6099; 15 Jln Hang Lekir; RM100 per person) Nancy of this near legendary Nonya restaurant (p220) teaches recommended cookery classes on request. Reserve well in advance.

Wok & Walk

COOKERY

(Map p210; ☎Hotel Equatorial 282 8333; Hotel Equatorial; 2-day packages from RM340 per person) Nonya cooking workshops include six

NO SMOKING

In 2011 Melaka's Chinatown was declared a no-smoking zone. It's not heavily enforced but the air is noticeably more smoke-free than elsewhere in the city.

signature dishes and packages can include a stay at Hotel Equatorial and meals at the hotel restaurant.

Peranakan Culinary Journey COOKERY
(☎289 8000; www.majesticmalacca.com; Majestic Malacca Hotel, 188 Jln Bunga Raya; RM285 per person) Learn about each ingredient and the history of each dish in a gorgeous kitchen with a master Peranakan chef at the Majestic Malacca Hotel.

Massage & Reflexology

It seems that reflexology centres have opened up on every corner in Melaka. If you have specific ailments – anything from migraines to water retention – many will create a special treatment for you. There are also ear candles, fire cupping, body scrubs and more. A one-hour massage at these types of places is usually RM60 while a half-hour foot massage costs RM30.

Biossentials Puri Spa SPA
(Map p210; ☎282 5588; www.hotelpuri.com; Hotel Puri, 118 Jln Tun Tan Cheng Lock; spa services from RM80; ☺Thu-Mon) This international calibre spa in a sensual garden has a delicious menu of treatments including steams, body wraps, scrubs, facials and a variety of massages.

Massa Sūtra MASSAGE
(Map p210; ☎016-662 503; www.massasutra.com; 20 Jln Kubu; 1hr massage RM60) We can say with conviction that Chris Loh is a master masseur (using Thai or Zen techniques).

Other Activities

Menara Taming Sari OBSERVATION TOWER
(Map p210; Jln Merdeka; child/adult RM10/20; ☉10am-10pm) Take a ride upwards in this 80m revolving tower that's considered an eyecore by many. Waits can be long and it's all a bit tourist-tacky but it is a good way to get your bearings and enjoy great views.



Tours

Historic walking tours are offered through several hotels. Particularly recommended are the ones led by Pek Choo Ho at the Majestic Malacca (p219) hotel.

Boat Trips

Melaka River Cruise BOAT TOUR
(Map p210; RM15) Frequent 40-minute river-boat trips (minimum eight people) along the Melaka River depart from two locations: the 'Spice Garden' on the corner of Jln Tun Mutahii and Jln Tun Sri Lanang in the north

of town, and the quay near the Maritime Museum. Cruises go 9km upriver past Kampong Morten and old godowns (river warehouses). There's also a hop-on, hop-off day pass for RM30.

Bike Tours

Eco Bike Tour BIKE TOUR
(☎019-652 5029; www.melakaonbike.com; RM100 per person, minimum 2 people) Explore the fascinating landscape around Melaka with Alias on his three-hour bike tour through 20km of oil-palm and rubber-tree plantations and delightful *kampung* communities surrounding town.

Malacca Night Cycling CYCLING
(☎016-668 8898; RM25-25) Touring Melaka at night takes the bite off the heat of the day and it's a pleasant time to cycle and see the city. Tours leave nightly at 8.30pm and last two to three hours.

★ Festivals & Events

Melaka celebrates all the major Malaysian holidays, including Chinese New Year and Thaipusam. The tourist department creates new festivals all the time but few become annual events.

Easter Good Friday and Easter Sunday processions are held outside St Peter's Church in March/April.

Festa San Pedro In late June, this festival honours the patron saint of the Portuguese fishing community. Celebrations take place at St Peter's Church and normally include a procession from the Porta de Santiago to Medan Portugis and carnival festivities.

Festa San Juan (Festival of St John) This festival is celebrated by Melaka's Eurasian community in late June by the lighting of candles in the Portuguese Settlement.

Dragon Boat Festival This June/July Chinese festival, marked by a dragon-boat race in the Strait of Melaka, commemorates the death, by drowning, of 3rd-century BC Chinese poet and statesman Qu Yuan.

Festa Santa Cruz In mid-September, this festival finishes with a candlelight procession of Melakan and Singaporean Catholics to Malim chapel.

Sleeping

So many new places are opening up in Melaka that accommodation options are particularly vulnerable to change. The good news is that quality is improving, but the bad news is that there's simply not enough tourism (except on weekends when everything books fast) to keep all these places open. Rooms have private showers and dorms have shared bathrooms, unless otherwise stated.

CHINATOWN

If you have the option of staying in Chinatown, do it. This is the vibrant historic centre of the city although it can get both busy and noisy.

45 Lekiu & The Stable

HISTORIC GUESTHOUSE \$\$\$

(Map p210; ☎012-623 4459; www.45lekiu.com; 45 Lg Hang Lekiu (45 Lekiu), No D Jln Hang Kasturi; 45 Lekiu weekdays/weekends RM999/1099, The Stable weekdays/weekends RM300/360; 🍽️🚿🛏️) These gorgeous restoration projects are in two different locations – when you stay at either, the whole house is yours and both have basic cooking facilities. 45 Lekiu is the more upscale with four extremely comfortable storeys of big old beams and exposed original brick work all within a clean, modern decor.

Highlights include a bougainvillea-filled courtyard with an elongated dipping pool and upper terrace that overlooks Melaka's ancient rooftops.

The Stable is a smaller two-story home with louvered, heritage-style doors, wood floors, gorgeous period tiles and timber beams. Again the furnishings and finishing touches are artistically modern.

River View Guesthouse

GUESTHOUSE \$

(Map p210; ☎012-327 7746; riverviewguesthouse@yahoo.com; 94 & 96 Jln Kampung Pantai; dm RM20, r RM45-70; 🍽️🚿🛏️) Bordering the ambient riverfront promenade, this immaculate guesthouse is housed in a large heritage building. There's a big shared kitchen and common area and the hosts begin your stay with a handy map of town and directions to all their favourite sights and restaurants.

Homemade cake is often on offer and you can choose to get through town via the serene riverside promenade at the back door rather than the busy streets of Chinatown at the front. The owner's overflow property,

Rooftop Guesthouse (Map p210; ☎327 7746; 39 Jln Kampong Pantai), is almost as nice but doesn't offer the riverfront perk.

Hotel Puri

HOTEL \$\$

(Map p210; ☎282 5588; www.hotelpuri.com; 118 Jln Tun Tan Cheng Lock; r RM164-564; 🍽️🚿🛏️) One of Chinatown's gems, Hotel Puri is an elegant creation in a superb old renovated Peranakan mansion. Its elaborate lobby, decked out with beautiful old cane and inlaid furniture, opens to a gorgeous courtyard garden. Standard rooms have butter-yellow walls, crisp sheets, satellite TV, wi-fi and shuttered windows. There's an on-site spa (Biossentials Puri Spa (p216), and breakfast, taken in the courtyard or air-conditioned dining area, is included.

Casa Del Rio

HOTEL \$\$\$

(Map p210; ☎6289 6888; www.casadelrio-melaka.com; 88 Jln Kota Laksmana; r RM778-1008, ste RM1928-3858; 🍽️🚿🛏️) The biggest hotel in the Chinatown heritage area with a fabulous location right on the river. The palatial architecture blends Portuguese/Mediterranean with Malaysian for a result that's uniquely airy and grand. Rooms are massive with bathrooms fit for a Portuguese princess and riverview rooms capture the feel of Asia and Venice combined.

There's a rooftop infinity pool that overlooks the river and common areas are strewn with loungable couches and tons of cushions.

Heeren House

GUESTHOUSE \$\$

(Map p210; ☎281 4241; www.melaka.net/heerenhouse; 1 Jln Tun Tan Cheng Lock; all incl breakfast s RM119-139, d RM129-149, f RM259; 🍽️) Lodging here positions you right in the heart of Chinatown, on the waterfront and within range of top local restaurants and sights. The airy, clean and lovely rooms (six in all) in this former warehouse largely overlook the river, and have polished floorboards, traditional furniture (some with four-poster beds) and clean showers.

Cafe 1511 Guesthouse

GUESTHOUSE \$

(Map p210; ☎286 0150; www.cafe1511.com; 52 Jln Tun Tan Cheng Lock; s/d incl breakfast RM60/90; 🍽️🚿🛏️) Set in a beautiful Peranakan mansion, the small, simple, spotless rooms here are jazzed up by tasteful international art on the walls. The place has an old-style feeling, set to the music of a water fountain in the lightwell that extends from the restaurant below.

Note that the guesthouse doesn't take guests under 30 years old. Because of demand the guesthouse recently opened an overflow property, Dlaksmiana Guesthouse which isn't as heritage-y but is in a more quiet location a block out of Chinatown.

Courtyard@Heeren

HOTEL \$\$

(Map p210; ☎281 0088; www.courtyardattheeren.com; 91 Jln Tun Tan Cheng Lock; d RM200-250, f RM 250-300, ste RM300-800; 🍷🍷) Modern rooms here are each decorated uniquely with light and bright decor paired with antique wood furniture. Some have minimalist arty stained-glass details, modern takes on Chinese latticework or drapery canopies. Not many rooms have windows but there's plenty of light pouring in from the open central courtyard. It's very professionally run with great service.

Jonker Boutique Hotel

HOTEL \$\$

(Map p210; ☎282 5151; www.jonkerboutiquehotel.com; 52 Jln Tun Tan Cheng Lock; s/d incl breakfast RM198/288; 🍷🍷) Each of the large rooms here are different but decorated in a similar style using modern black-and-cream patterned wallpaper paired with neutral-coloured walls. Most rooms have windows, and bathrooms have retro black-and-white tiles. It's well run and centrally located, but be prepared for some street noise on Friday and Saturday nights when the night market's on. Room rates go up by about 30% on weekends and holidays.

Jalan Jalan Guesthouse

GUESTHOUSE \$

(Map p210; ☎283 3937; www.jalanjalanguuesthouse.com; 8 Jln Tukang Emas; dm/s/d RM15/30/50; 🍷🍷) A lovely hostel in a restored old shop-house painted periwinkle blue. Fan-cooled rooms with one shared bathroom are spread out over a tranquil inner garden-courtyard. As with some other older places, though, noise from your neighbours might keep you awake at night. The hosts get great reviews and there's bike rental available.

Hangout@Jonker

HOTEL \$\$

(Map p210; ☎282 8318; www.hangouthotels.com; 19 & 21 Jln Hang Jebat; r incl light breakfast from RM147; 🍷🍷🍷) Opened as a second site by a popular hostel in Singapore, this location shares the same high standards of cleanliness and amenities (hang-out lounges, free movies and internet) but the spare modern style of concrete and tile is a little out of place in Melaka. Prices go up 20% on weekends and holidays.

Sama-Sama Guest House

GUESTHOUSE \$

(Map p210; ☎305 1980; www.voyagetogether.com; 26 Jl Tukang Besi; dm RM15, r RM25-55) This place (the longest running hostel in Chinatown) has a great hippie-ish vibe, with a courtyard overflowing with potted plants, mini-ponds and wind chimes. The whole place, including the shared toilets, is kept relatively clean but when anyone walks down the hall it sounds like they are stomping in combat boots.

Ringo's Foyer

GUESTHOUSE \$

(Map p210; ☎016-354 2223; 46A Jln Portugis; r RM60-90; 🍷🍷) Just far enough from central Chinatown to be quiet, but close enough to be convenient, Ringo's is plain and clean, and has friendly staff and a relaxing rooftop chill-out area that plays host to impromptu barbecues.

Chong Hoe Hotel

HOTEL \$

(Map p210; ☎282 6102; 26 Jln Tukang Emas; s/d RM30/48; 🍷🍷) Chong Ho has stayed true to its no-frills functional personality and now, after all the years of staying exactly the same, it has an unpretentious charm that's lacking elsewhere. Except when Masjid Kampung Kling starts its call to prayer, it's a quiet and blissfully unexciting place to catch some Zs.

Aldy Hotel

HOTEL \$\$

(Map p210; ☎283 3232; www.aldyhotel.com.my; 27 Jln Kota; r incl breakfast RM160-450; 🍷🍷) At the foot of Bukit St Paul, this hotel has a location to die for and is a good choice for families. Small rooms are dark but modern and are equipped with satellite TV. A rooftop Jacuzzi adds to the package. There's no additional charge for children under 12 sharing a room with parents.

Tidur Tidur

GUESTHOUSE \$

(Map p210; ☎014-9298 3817; tidurtidurgh@yahoo.com; 92 Lg Hang Jebat; weekdays/weekends per person RM15/20) Rooms with bunk beds are small and boxy and sleep four to five people, but the hip vibe (it's at the back of the owner's unique T-shirt shop) and river-side hangout area make this a great place to stay.

Voyage Guest House

GUESTHOUSE \$

(Map p210; ☎281 5216; www.voyagetogether.com; Jln Tukang Besi; dm RM15) Clean, industrial-sized dorm rooms and common areas are decorated with a nouveau heritage Chinatown jazz-lounge look. It's run by Voyager

Travellers Lounge and you get free bike rental too.

JALAN TAMAN MELAKA RAYA & AROUND

This area is in the heart of Melaka's mall shopping zone and is only a short walk to the historic centre and Chinatown.

Hotel Equatorial

HOTEL \$\$\$

(Map p210; ☎282 8333; www.equatorial.com; Jln Parameswara; r RM300-1000; 🍷🍷🍷) While it's a bit frayed around the edges, somehow this adds to the old charm of this centrally located hotel. Good discounts online can cut prices nearly in half for excellent value. Service is well mannered and the overall presentation is crisp. There's a swimming pool, ladies-only pool, a quality fitness centre, tennis court and wi-fi access.

It's worth upgrading to one of the deluxe rooms (RM500), which have either balconies or heaps of extra room space. Special packages are available through the hotel, including tours and specials such as cookery courses.

Emily Travellers Home

GUESTHOUSE \$

(Map p210; ☎012-301 8574; 71 Jln Parameswara; dm/s RM16/24, d RM32-48; 🍷) Enter the humble entrance off the busy road and step into another dimension filled with plants, koi ponds, a bunny hopping around (named Mr Playboy) and happy, mingling people. Every room is different, from funky cottages with semi-outdoor 'jungle showers' to simple wooden rooms in the house.

Note that this place is rustic and it's not for you if you need hot water or air-con.

Holiday Inn

HOTEL \$\$\$

(Map p210; ☎255 9000; www.melaka.holidayinn.com; Jln Sayed Abdul Aziz; r RM240-575; 🍷🍷🍷) Boldly facing historic Melaka like a gleaming white, middle finger, rooms here are comfy, new and carpeted, yet bland. Ask for a top-storey room for fantastic views over the Strait of Melaka.

Hatten Hotel

HOTEL \$\$\$

(Map p210; ☎286 9696; www.hattenhotel.com; Hatten Square, Jln Merdeka; r from RM370; 🍷🍷🍷) Perched over Hatten Square mall and linked to both Dataran Palahwan and Parkinson malls (and steps from Mahkota Medical Centre), this modern place has sea views from the 13th floor upwards, a rooftop infinity pool plus excellent service and included breakfasts.

Malacca Straits Hotel

HOTEL \$\$\$

(Map p210; ☎286 1888; www.malaccastraitshotel.com; 27 Jln Chan Koon Cheng; r RM150, ste incl breakfast 220-315; 🍷🍷🍷) Smack up against Hotel Equatorial, the spacious rooms are furnished with some exquisite teak furniture including four-poster beds in every room and batik fabrics everywhere. While standard rooms all have bathtubs, an upgrade to a suite adds a Jacuzzi. Prices go up about 25% on weekends and holidays.

LITTLE INDIA TO BUKIT CHINA

This is a varied area that will let you see a less touristed side of the city while still remaining close to the sights.



Majestic Malacca

HOTEL \$\$\$

(Map p210; ☎289 8000; www.majesticmalacca.com; 188 Jln Bunga Raya; r RM410-2000; 🍷🍷🍷) Melaka's most elegant hotel is an interesting mix: the lobby is in a 1920s colonial Chinese mansion while the bulk of the hotel is in a tasteful modern building behind. Rooms continue with this old and new theme with hardwood floors, sheer ivory-coloured drapes and heritage-style wood furnishings – yet all are very modern in their level of comfort.

Of course the place is stacked with amenities including a small swimming pool, gym, a top-notch spa and stellar service.



Apa Kaba Home & Stay

GUESTHOUSE \$

(Map p210; ☎283 8196; www.apakaba.hostel.com; 28 Kg Banda Kaba; r incl breakfast RM40-90; 🍷🍷) Nestled in a quiet and authentic Malay *kampung* that seems to magically float in a bubble in the heart of town, this homestay-style guesthouse is in a simple yet beautiful old Malay house complete with creaky wood floors, louvred shutters and bright paint.

You can chill out in the enormous garden (look for ripe mangos) or take a stroll out the back gate through tiny lanes that meander into Chinatown.

Renaissance Melaka Hotel

HOTEL \$\$\$

(Map p210; ☎284 8888; www.marriott.com; Jln Bendahara; r RM350-900; 🍷🍷🍷) The Renaissance offers good service and dated luxury. Large windows in the rooms take advantage of views that sweep over Melaka in all directions, while the spacious rooms are modern while incorporating classic Chinese touches. Suites aren't really worth the extra money unless you really need a windowless cave attached to your room.

Old Town

Family Guesthouse

GUESTHOUSE \$

(Map p210; ☎286 0796; www.melakaguesthouse.com; 119 Jln Temenggong; dm RM15, r RM30-70; 🍽️🍷) This basic French-Malay-run backpackers gets more points for its low-key ambience, cleanliness and friendly, helpful owners than for its plain but perfectly passable rooms. It's in the second storey of an apartment-type building but is quite spacious with plenty of tiled, open spaces for lounging. There's a kitchen for guests' use.



Eating

Melaka's food mirrors the city's eclectic, multicultural DNA. Peranakan cuisine (Nonya; prepared here with a salty Indonesian influence) is the most famous type of cooking here, but there's also Portuguese Eurasian food, Indian, Chinese, Indonesian and more.

CHINATOWN

On Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, Jln Hang Jebat turns into the not-to-be-missed **Jonker Walk Night Market** (Map p210; Jln Hang Jebat). Besides the official Hainan Food Street (p220), there are also hawkers stalls along Jln Hang Jebat and on Jln Tokong where it meets Jln Portugis.



Pak Putra Restaurant

PAKISTANI \$\$

(Map p210; 56 Jln Taman Kota Laksmana; tandoori from RM8; 🍽️dinner, closed every other Mon) This fabulous Pakistani place cooks up a variety of meats and seafood in clay tandoori ovens perched on the footpath. Apart from the tandoori try the *taw* prawns (cooked with onion, yoghurt and coriander, RM11) or muton rogan josh (in onion gravy with spices and chilli oil, RM9). Everything is so good that dinner conversation is often reduced to ohs and ahs of gustatory delight.



Nancy's Kitchen

NONYA \$

(Map p210; 15 Jln Hang Lekir; meals RM10; 🕒11am-5.30pm, closed Tue) In a town already known for its graciousness, this home-cooking Nonya restaurant is our favourite for friendly service. If you want an intimate meal, head elsewhere. The server is as chatty and full of suggestions as they come, and will have you making conversation with the other handful of customers in no time. It's like a happy dinner (or lunch) party with particularly good food. Try the house speciality, chicken with candlenut (a large white nut used to make a mild, creamy sauce). Still hungry? Nancy also offers cooking courses (p215).

Hainan Food Street

HAWKER \$

(Map p210; Jln Hang Lekir; dishes from RM3; 🕒6pm-12am Fri, Sat & Sun) About a dozen very good food stalls serving everything from Hainan chicken pie, Nonya laksa and Japanese BBQ open with the Jonker's Walk Night Market (p223) on weekends.

Low Yong Mow

CHINESE \$

(Map p210; ☎282 1235; Jln Tokong; dim sum RM1-8; 🕒5am-noon, closed Tue) Famous Malaysia-wide for large and delectably well-stuffed *pao* (steamed pork buns), this place is Chinatown's biggest breakfast treat. With high ceilings, plenty of fans running and a view of Masjid Kampung Kling, the atmosphere oozes all the charms of Chinatown. It's great for early-bus-departure breakfasts and is usually packed with talkative, newspaper-reading locals by around 7am.

Poh Piah Lwee

NONYA \$

(Map p210; Jln Kibu; dishes from RM3; 🕒9am-5pm) An authentic and lively hole in the wall with one specialist cook preparing delicious Hokkein-style *popiah* (lettuce, bean sprouts, egg and chilli paste in a soft sleeve; RM2), another making near-perfect *rojak* (fruit and vegetable salad in a shrimp

WORTH A TRIP

MEDAN PORTUGIS

There's really not much reason to head out to this nondescript neighbourhood other than to eat. On Friday and Saturday evenings, head to **Restoran de Lisbon**, where you can sample Malay-Portuguese dishes at outdoor tables. Try the delicious local specialties of chilli crabs (RM20) or the distinctly Eurasian devil curry (RM10). Any other time of the week, Medan Portugis has food stalls serving similar dishes to those found at restaurants at seaside tables.

DON'T LEAVE MELAKA WITHOUT TRYING...

laksa – a regional version distinguished by its coconut milk and lemongrass flavours

popiah – an uber-spring roll stuffed with shredded carrots, prawns, chilli, garlic, palm sugar and much, much more

cendol – a shaved-ice monstrosity with jellies, syrup and coconut milk

Nonya pineapple tarts – buttery pastries with a chewy pineapple jam filling

chicken rice ball – Hokkien-style chicken and balled-up rice dumplings

Assam fish heads – spicy tamarind fish-head stew.

satay celup – like fondue but better; you dunk tofu, prawns and more into bubbling soup and cook it to your liking

devil curry – a fiery Eurasian chicken curry

paste, lime juice, sugar and peanut dressing, RM3) while the third whips up a fantastic laksa (RM3).

Jonker 88 Heritage

DESSERT \$

(Map p210; 88 Jln Hang Jebat; ☎11am-10pm Tue-Thu, till 11pm Fri & Sat, till 9pm Sun) Many locals say this is Melaka's best *cendol* (a pandan-leaf flavoured desert served with shaved ice, red beans, jaggery syrup and coconut milk, from RM3). There are several variations on the theme, including a durian version, and the laksa here rocks as well. There's always a line on weekends.

Vegetarian Restaurant

VEGETARIAN \$

(Map p210; 43 Jln Hang Lekui; mains around RM3; ☎7.30am-2.30pm Mon-Sat; 🍴) Every Chinatown needs its basic vegetarian cafe and this is Melaka's. All the local specialties from laksa and wonton mee to 'fish balls' are here but, although they taste as good as the real thing, are completely meat-free.

Limau-Limau Cafe

WESTERN \$

(Map p210; 9 Jln Hang Lekui; fruit juice from RM6, mains from RM7; ☎Sun-Fri 9.30am-6.30pm, 9.30am-9.30pm Sat; 🍴) Decorated with dark-coloured ceramics and an arty twist, this long-running quiet cafe serves the same predictably good salads, sandwiches, fruit juices and milk shakes. It's also a mellow stop for internet and wi-fi.

Hoe Kee Chicken Rice

MELAKAN \$\$

(Map p210; 4 Jln Hang Jebat; meals around RM20; ☎8.30am-3pm, closed last Wed of month) Come here to try the local specialties, chicken rice ball and *asam* fish heads (fish heads in a spicy tamarind gravy). You'll need to arrive here off-hours or expect to wait, especially

on weekends. The restaurant's setting, with wood floors and ceiling fans, is lovely; the food can be hit or miss.

Harper's Cafe

FUSION \$\$

(Map p210; 2 & 4 Lg Hang Jebat; meals RM40; ☎4pm-1am Mon & Wed-Sat, 11am-1am Sun) Perched elegantly over Sungai Melaka, breezy Harper's serves excellent (though small) Malay-European fusion dishes in a rather stark decor. It's worth visiting for the food, though the service can be slow.

Baboon House

BURGERS \$\$

(Map p210; 89 Jln Tun Tan Cheng Hok; burgers around RM14; ☎10am-5pm Mon-Thu, till 7pm Fri-Sun; 🍴) This cafe is housed in a long Peranakan-style building with a light and plant-filled courtyard specialises in burgers on homemade buns.

LITTLE INDIA TO BUKIT CHINA

There's a whole string of local-style Chinese cafes around Jln Bunga Raya (ever-full of chattering locals) that serve chicken or duck rice as well as rice, noodle and soup dishes at very low prices.

TOP CHOICE Capitol Satay

MELAKAN \$

(Map p210; ☎283 5508; 41 Lg Bukit China; meals around RM8) Famous for its *satay celup* (a Melaka adaptation of satay steamboat), this place is usually packed and is one of the cheapest outfits in town. Stainless-steel tables have bubbling vats of soup in the middle where you dunk skewers of okra stuffed with tofu, sausages, chicken, prawns and bok choy. Side dishes include pickled eggs and ginger.

COCONUT KUNG FU

While enjoying the Jonker's Walk Night Market, don't miss the performance by kung fu master **Dr Ho Eng Hui** (☎around 6.30-9pm Fri & Sat) at the southern end of Jln Hang Jebat. He eats fire and throws knives, but the real reason to stick around is to see him pummel his finger into a coconut. Yes, he really appears to do this (his knarled finger adds evidence) and he's been entertaining folks with the trick for over 35 years. Dr Ho Eng Hui is in fact a doctor, and the purpose of his performance is to sell a 'miracle oil' (RM10) that cures aches and pains.



Selvam

INDIAN \$

(Map p210; ☎281 9223; 3 Jln Temenggong; meals around RM8; ☎) This is a classic banana-leaf restaurant always busy with its loyal band of local patrons ordering tasty and cheap curries, roti and tandoori chicken sets. Even devout carnivores will second-guess their food preferences after trying the Friday-afternoon vegetarian special with 10 varieties of veg.

Restoran Ban Lee Siang

Satay Celup

MELAKAN \$

(☎284 1935; 45E Jln Om Kim Wee; meals around RM8; ☎5pm-midnight) This place is a little out of the way but locals claim the ingredients are the freshest. Go pick out your skewers from the fridge then cook them in the boiling vats of delectable satay sauce.

Bulldog Cafe

NONYA, INTERNATIONAL \$\$

(Map p210; ☎292 1920; 145 Jln Bendahara; meals RM10) Nonya, Chinese, Thai and Western dishes are on offer at this local-feeling joint in a lovely Peranakan-style building. For cheap snacks, sample the Nonya *popiah* – lettuce, bean sprouts, egg and chilli paste in a soft wrapping or the *pai tee* (crispy cone-shaped morsels of rice flour, stuffed with vegetables).

Baker's Oven & Cafe

BAKERY \$

(Map p210; Jln Bendahara; continental breakfast set RM7.50; ☎9am-5pm) Serves fresh European-style baked goods, coffee, tea, sandwiches and light meals.



Drinking

Unlike much of Malaysia, Melaka is studded with watering holes. The Friday-, Saturday- and Sunday-night Jonker's Walk Night Market (p223) in Chinatown closes down Jln Heng Lekir to traffic and the handful of bars along the lane become a mini street party with tables oozing beyond the sidewalks and live music.

Geographér Cafe

BAR

(Map p210; ☎281 6813; www.geographer.com.my; 83 Jln Hang Jebat; ☎10am-1am Wed-Sun) This ventilated, breezy bar with outside seating and late hours, in a prewar corner shophouse, is a godsend. Seat yourself with a beer amid the throng and applaud long-time resident artist and musician Mr Burns as he eases through gnarled classics. A tasty choice of local and Western dishes and laid-back but professional service rounds it all off.



Cheng Ho Tea House

TEAHOUSE

(Map p210; Jln Tokong; ☎10am-5pm) In an exquisite setting that resembles a Chinese temple garden courtyard, relax over a pot of fine Chinese tea (from RM15) or take a tea appreciation course with owner and tea connoisseur, Pak.

Zheng Ho Tea House

TEAHOUSE

(Map p210; ☎016-764 0588; 3 Jln Kuli; tea ceremony for four people RM20) The best place in town for tea ceremony, this place is humble but the family are simply lovely and it just feels good to be here. There are also a few rooms for rent upstairs (from RM130 including one home cooked meal).

Voyager Travellers Lounge

CAFE, BAR

(Map p210; ☎281 5216; 40 Lg Hang Jebat; ☎) Ease back into a wicker chair and order a cold beer (and/or an all-day Western-style breakfast) from the glowing bar built out of recycled bottles. There are often night-time activities on, from movies to mellow live music, and Yaksa, the young owner, can help arrange activities throughout Melaka.



Entertainment

Mixx

CLUB

(Map p210; 2nd floor, Mahkota Arcade, Jln Syed Abdul Aziz; RM10; ☎10pm-late Tue-Sat) Melaka's hottest new club has two parts: Paradox, a laser-lit warehouse-style venue where in-

ternational DJs spin techno and electronic beats; and Arris, which has a garden area and live bands. It ain't KL but for Melaka this place is very hip. Cover is charged on Friday and Saturday nights only (when the place gets VERY crowded) and includes one drink.

Eleven

CLUB

(Map p210; 11 Jln Hang Lekir) This is *the* place to go if you want to get your groove on in Chinatown. Yes there's hip heritage lounge-style seating and Eurasian food, but head here after around 11pm (weekends in particular) and resident DJs spin their best and the dance floor fills. It has been dubbed Melaka's only gay bar but it's a very relaxed scene and you'll find all sorts hanging out.

Wildlife Theatre

WILDLIFE SHOWS

(www.wildlifetheatre.com.my; Pulau Melaka; weekdays adult/child RM15/10, weekends adult/child RM20/15; ☺shows at 3pm & 6pm; 📺) This won't rival marine mammal shows in Europe or the Americas but the sea lions here do a good job of entertaining kids. There are also, birds, snakes and cultural shows from the Iban of Sarawak. While animal shows are always dubious in the treatment of their flock, this place is less depressing than you'd expect.

Golden Screen Cinemas

CINEMA

(Map p210; ☎281 0018; 2nd fl, Mahkota Pde & 3rd fl Dataran Pahlawan; tickets RM9) These silver screens show everything from Western blockbusters to Bollywood flicks.



Shopping

Taking time to browse Chinatown's eclectic mix of shops is an activity in itself. Melakan favourites include Nonya beaded shoes, Nonya 'clogs' (with a wooden base and a single plastic-strip upper), antiques (know your stuff and haggle aggressively), South-east Asian and Indian clothing, handmade tiles, charms, crystals and more. Peek into the growing array of silent artists studios, where you might see a painter busy at work in a back room.



Jonker's Walk Night Market

MARKET

(Map p210; Jln Hang Jebat; ☺6-11pm Fri-Sun) Melaka's weekly shopping extravaganza keeps the shops along Jln Hang Jebat open late while trinket sellers, food hawkers and the occasional fortune teller close the street

to traffic. It has become far more commercial, attracting scores of Singaporean tourists over the years, but it is an undeniably colourful way to spend an evening shopping and grazing.

Orangutan House

CLOTHING

(Map p210; 59 Lg Hang Jebat; ☺10am-6pm Thu-Tue) All shirts are the work of local artist Charles Cham and have themes ranging from Chinese astrology animals to rather edgy topics (at least for Malaysia) such as 'Use Malaysian Rubber' above a sketch of a condom. Other branches are at **96 Jln Tun Tan Cheng Lok** (Map p210; www.charlescham.com; 96 Jln Tun Tan Cheng Lok; ☺closed Tue) and **12 Jln Hang Jebat** (Map p210; www.charlescham.com; 12 Jln Hang Jebat; ☺closed Thu).

Wah Aik Shoemaker

NONYA SHOES

(Map p210; 56 Jln Tokong) Raymond Yeo continues the tradition begun by his grandfather in the same little shoemaker's shop that has been in his family for generations. The beaded Nonya shoes here are considered Melaka's finest and begin at a steep but merited RM300. Tiny silk bound-feet shoes (from RM90) are also available.

Dataran Pahlawan

MALL

(Map p210; Jln Merdeka) Melaka's largest mall, with a collection of upscale designer shops and restaurants in the western half and an odd, nearly underground-feeling craft-and-souvenir market in the eastern portion.

Mahkota Parade Shopping Complex

MALL

(Map p210; ☎282 6151; Lot B02, Jln Merdeka) For practical needs such as books, cameras, pharmacy goods or electronics, head to this shopping complex.

Hatten Square

MALL

(Map p210; Jln Merdeka) This new fashion-heavy mall – with Hatten Hotel (p219) on top – is linked by pedestrian bridge to Dataran Pahlawan and Mahkota Parade Malls so you could now theoretically spend days in these three massive complexes without ever going outside.



Information

Emergency

Melaka Police Hotline (☎285 1999; Jln Kota)

Immigration Offices

Immigration Office (☎282 4958; 2nd fl, Wisma Persekutuan, Jln Hang Tuah)

Internet Access

Most hotels and guesthouses have wi-fi and several cafes in Chinatown have a computer for clients and charge around RM3 per hour.

Medical Services

Mahkota Medical Centre (☎281 3333, 284 8222; Jln Merdeka) A private hospital offering a full range of services.

Money

Moneychangers are scattered throughout Chinatown and near the bus stations. The only ATM in Chinatown is at **Heeren Inn** (Map p210; ☎288 3600; heerenin@streamyx.com; 23 Jln Tun Tan Cheng Lock; d RM78-145; ㊦㊧). There are more ATMs at the shopping malls.

Post

Post Office (Jln Laksmana; ☎8.30am-5pm Mon-Sat) Off Town Square.

Tourist Information

Tourism Malaysia (☎283 6220; Jln Mahkota; ☎9am-10pm) At the Menara Taming Sari tower; has very knowledgeable, helpful staff.

Tourist Office (☎281 4803; www.melak.gov.my; Jln Kota; ☎9am-1pm & 2-5.30pm) Diagonally across the square from Christ Church.

Getting There & Away

Melaka is 144km from Kuala Lumpur, 224km from Johor Bahru and just 94km from Port Dickson.

Air

Melaka International Airport is 20km north of Melaka in Batu Berendam. **Firefly** (www.fireflyz.com.my) offers flights between Melaka and KL's Subang Airport (twice weekly) and Penang (one flight Wednesday). Wings Air (www.lionair.co.id) and Riau Airlines (www.riau-airlines.com) fly to/from Pekanbaru in Indonesia twice a week.

Bus

Melaka Sentral, the huge, modern long-distance bus station, is inconveniently located opposite a huge branch of Tesco off Jln Tun Razak, in the north of town. Luggage deposit at Melaka Sentral is RM2 per bag. There is also an ATM and restaurants.

A taxi into town should cost RM20, or you can take bus 17 (RM1.40).

You can buy bus tickets in advance from downtown Melaka (not a bad idea on busy weekends or if you have a plane to catch) at **Discovery Cafe** (Map p210; 3 Jln Bunga Raya) – it charges RM5 for the service.

MELAKA BUSES

Destination	Fare	Frequency	Duration
Johor Bahru	RM24	hourly	3½ hours
KL	RM17.50-27.50	every half hour	two hours
KLIA/LCCT Airports	RM27.50	nine per day	three hours
Kota Bharu	RM51	one daily	10 hours
Mersing	RM28	three per day	4½ hours
Muar	RM5	frequent	one hour
Penang	RM50	twice per day	7 hours
Singapore	RM27	four per day	4½ hour

Car

Car-hire prices begin at around RM150 per day. If driving, Melaka's one-way traffic system requires patience. Try **Hawk** (☎283 7878; 52 Jln Cem-paka), north of town.

Taxi

Taxis leave from the long-distance bus station. Taxi rates: Johor Bahru (RM250), Mersing (RM300), KL (RM170) and KL airport (RM160).

Train

The nearest **train station** (☎441 1034) is 38km north of Melaka at Tampin on the main north-south line from KL to Singapore. Taxis from Melaka cost around RM60 or take the Tai Lye bus (RM5, 1½ hours), which leaves every half-hour from Melaka Sentral.

Getting Around

Melaka is small enough to walk around or, for the traffic-fearless, you can rent a bike for around

GETTING TO INDONESIA: MELAKA CITY TO DUMAI

Getting to the border High-speed ferries make the trip from Melaka to Dumai, Sumatra, daily at 10am (one way/return RM119/170, 1¼ hours). The quay is walking distance or a short taxi ride from the town centre. Tickets are available at the **Tunas Rupert Follow Me Express** (☎283 2505; 310 Taman Melaka Raya) and other offices near the wharf.

At the border Citizens of most countries can obtain a 30-day visa on arrival (US\$25).

Moving on Dumai is on Sumatra's east coast and is a 10-hour bus ride from Bukitittinggi.

TRICKED OUT TRISHAWS

Nowhere else in Malaysia will you find such a wild and crazy collection of trishaws. Outrageously kitsch, the favourite decorations are plastic flowers, baby doll heads, religious paraphernalia, tinsel, Christmas lights and a sound system. While taking a ride in one of these things might be the most 'I'm a tourist' thing you do in Malaysia, it's good fun and supports an industry that is dying nearly everywhere else in the country. As a spectator, keep an eye out for Singaporean tourists hiring out trishaws en masse: the effect, with several '80s hits blaring at the same time, cameras snapping and all that glitzy decoration, turns the streets of Melaka into a circus-like parade.

RM3 per hour from guesthouses around Chinatown. A useful service is town bus 17, running every 15 minutes from Melaka Sentral to the centre of town, past the huge Mahkota Parade shopping complex, to Taman Melaka Raya and on to Medan Portugis.

Taking to Melaka's streets by trishaw is a must – by the hour they should cost about RM40, or RM15 for any one-way trip within the town, but you'll have to bargain.

Taxis should cost around RM15 for a trip anywhere around town with a 50% surcharge between 1am and 6am.

AROUND MELAKA CITY

Ayer Keroh

06

About 15km northeast of Melaka, Ayer Keroh (also spelled Air Keroh) has several contrived tourist attractions that are largely deserted on weekdays. Kids will like the lushly landscaped **Melaka Zoo** (adult/child RM7/4, night zoo adult/child RM10/5; ☀9am-6pm daily, night zoo 8-11pm Fri & Sat), the second-largest zoo in the country (with 200 different species). The animals here are in good condition compared to many zoos in Asia.

But the main attraction in Ayer Keroh is the **Taman Mini Malaysia/Asean** (adult/child RM4/2; ☀9am-6pm), a large theme park that has examples of traditional houses from all 13 Malaysian states, as well as neighbouring Asean countries. Also here is **Hutan Rekreasi Air Keroh** (Air Keroh Recreational Forest; admission free), part secondary jungle and part landscaped park with paved trails, a 250m canopy walk, picnic areas and a forestry museum.

Ayer Keroh can be reached on bus 19 from Melaka (RM2, 30 minutes), or a taxi will cost around RM45.

Pulau Besar

06

The small island of Pulau Besar, 5km off the coast southeast of Melaka, has some interesting graves and meditation caves that are popular pilgrimages for Indian Muslims, but the main reason to come here is for the white beaches and jungle walks. Unfortunately, in 2010 Besar will become the largest independent oil storage terminal in the country, which will surely make the already not-so-great water even more polluted.

A handful of basic *kedai kopi* (coffee shops) can be found near the boat dock.

Boats (return trip RM40, 30 minutes) depart from the jetty at Anjung Batu (0261 0492) about every two hours from 8am (last boat returns at 10.30pm). The jetty is several kilometres past the old pier at Umbai, southeast of Melaka. Take an SKA bus from Melaka Sentral to Merlimau and ask to be let off at the jetty – it's about a 10-minute walk from the bus stop.

Alor Gajah

Just off the road to KL, 24km north of Melaka, is the countryside town of Alor Gajah. In the town centre is the peaceful and grassy Alor Gajah Square, which is bordered by an array of gaily painted shophouses. Most Melaka-KL buses stop in Alor Gajah so it's possible to stop here between the two cities if you're willing to change buses. A taxi to A'Famosa should cost around RM22.

👁 Sights

A'Famosa Resort

THEME PARK

(www.afamosa.com; Water World adult/child RM35/25, Animal World Safari adult/child RM60/50; ☀Water World 11am-7pm Mon & Wed-Fri, 9am-8pm Sat & Sun, Animal World Safari 9am-6pm) Half an

hour from Melaka and an hour from KL, the 520-hectare A'Famosa Resort is a cheesy, all-encompassing resort popular with Malay and Singaporean tourists. You'd be hard pressed not to have fun at the 8-hectare **Water World**, which has two seven-storey-high speed slides, a tube ride and a manufactured beach with a wave pool. **Animal World Safari** has animal shows, with an array of critters doing human activities and aren't something that animal lovers will enjoy. A special rate of adult/child RM75/61 gets you into both the Animal World Safari and Water World. Also within the resort is a 27-hole **golf course** that is rated in the country's top 10.

Tanjung Bidara

006

For an escape from the city, head to white-sand Tanjung Bidara, about 30km northwest of Melaka. It's well away from the main highway, requiring you to take back roads through rice paddies and farms to get to the shore. It's literally deserted

midweek, except for maybe one or two fishermen casting from the beach, and only one valiant stall at the beachfront food court is open outside of Saturday and Sunday. The water lapping on the fine sand is brown with sediment and pollution so it's not the best place for swimming, but it's fun to sit against the jungle and watch the massive freighters head down the famous Strait of Melaka.

The main beach area is at the recently refurbished **Tanjung Bidara Beach Resort** (☎384 2990; www.tanjungbidara.worldheritage.com.my; r from RM280 incl breakfast; ☎☎☎), an older resort with a small swimming pool and restaurant.

Further budget accommodation is strung out over several kilometres along the beach, broken only by a large military camp. There are several simple beachside chalet guest-houses in the friendly Malay village of Kampung Balik Batu.

Buses 42 and 47 from Melaka go to Masjid Tanah, from where a taxi to Tanjung Bidara Beach Resort or Kampung Balik Batu costs RM10.

© Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'